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made the grammatical system of the Masai language coherent and clear. It has a marked love for lengthy formations, and until the articles, relatives, verbal prefixes and affixes had been separated out it was impossible to discover not only roots, but even the simple forms of nouns and verbs. Much still remains to be done in dividing these forms into their essential parts and formative elements, but the general structure of the language appears to be established beyond doubt.

Except for the length of the words, the phonetics are simple and easy. Difficult groups of consonants and the harsher gutturals are absent, and the utterance seems to be somewhat languid, and in particular the pronunciation of the labials tends to be indistinct. The verb is clearly distinguished from the noun, and shows great luxuriance of formation, but has only moderate powers of expressing the categories of personality and time. A prefix indicates not only the subject but also the pronominal object; but the distinction is not always complete: thus Aasuj means either I follow thee, or they follow me; Kisuj, thou followest me, they follow thee, or we follow him. Only present and past times are clearly and regularly expressed. The future is sporadic. The imperative is not, as in so many languages, the simple verbal root, but a form analogous to the subjunctive. The negative is expressed by *m* or *mi*, but various circumlocutions are also used. There is a great wealth of derivative forms. These comprise an impersonal passive; forms denoting motion to and from the speaker; a form indicating that the action is done in the interests of some one; another indicating the instrument with which or the place in which a thing is done; reflexive, causative, and neuter formations.

Unlike the verb, the noun shows very little power of inflexion, and can only indicate number. The plural is formed by a great variety of suffixes, such as *a*, *i*, *o*, *ra*, *ta*, *tin*, *shi*, *shin*, *ni*, *n*, *k*, &c., but it is noticeable that the singular is often formed from the plural, that is to say, a collective noun is individualized by the addition of a suffix, e.g. Il-Keyu, the Elgeyo tribe, Ol-Keyuni, one man of the tribe; il-akir, stars, but ol-akira, a particular star. Not only are there no case inflexions, but prepositions are almost entirely absent, so that the possibility of indicating case relations in a substantive is very limited. The nominative and accusative are not distinguished except by position, even in pronouns. The genitive is expressed in various ways, usually with the help of the article and a particle of varying form, in which the

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PART I

EN-GUṬUK OO-'L-MAASAE
MASAI GRAMMAR

ALPHABET AND PRONUNCIATION.

Vowels.

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A represents the English *a* in father.
E " " *a* in fate.
E " " *e* in benefit.
Á " " *a* in dare, but longer and more open.
I " " *i* in hit.
Í " " *i* in ravine.
O " " *o* in not.
Ó " " *o* in mote.
Ó " " *au* in paw.
U " " *u* in bull.
Ú " " *u* in flute.
Á " " *u* in but, *o* in tongue.
Ái " " *i* in ice, *ai* in aisle.

Ae is a diphthong similar to *ai*, but formed by a union of the vowels *a* and *e*.

Au represents the English *ou* in how.
Oi " " *oi* in oil.

Ei. These two letters are usually pronounced separately, but they are sometimes slurred over and are scarcely distinguishable from *ei* in eight or *ey* in they.

Whenever *ai* or *ei* are not pronounced as diphthongs, the *i* is marked by a diæresis, thus, *aï*[1].

Vowels are only doubled when there is a distinct repetition of a single sound. Sometimes, however, sounds which when spoken slowly must be indicated by a double vowel, are contracted into a long single vowel when spoken quickly.

[1] Examples of *ai*, *ei*, and *au*:—'Ng-ai, the bows; eng-ai, the god; eng-au, the other.

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CONSONANTS.

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B, *d*, *h* as in English.

G is hard, as in the English word go.

H is used as an aspirate only in a few interjections.

Gh is a *g* followed by an *h* as in log-hut, and resembles the *gh* in Sanskrit. It is not pronounced like the Arabic *ghain*.

J nearly resembles the English *j*, though it is sometimes pronounced like *dy*.

Ch as in church. It, however, is sometimes exchangeable with *j* or *dy*: e. g. ol-chani, the tree, may also be pronounced ol-jani or ol-dyani.

Sh, *l*, *m*, *n* as in English.

Ng has two separate sounds, the one hard as in the English word finger, the other as in singer. The latter sound is written *ng*.

Ny. This sound is similar to *ni* in the English word minion, or *ñ* in Spanish.

P is more explosive than in English.

R is always well pronounced or rolled on the tongue. The Northern Masai sometimes pronounce this sound like a burring *r*.

S, *t*, *w* as in English.

W. In a few words there appears to be a trace of a *w* which is only partially pronounced even when talking slowly: e. g. Ɔ́ɔ, come.

Hw represents the sound of *wh* in the Scotch why or wherefore.

B, *p*, *t*, and *w* are pronounced in a lazy way by just opening the lips.

Y is a consonant, as in yard.

CHANGES OF LETTERS, AND REMARKS.

The Masai of Nairobi and Naivasha sometimes use *a* for *e*. Thus:

Ang-are (for eng-are), the water.

Before *i*, *as* changes to an accentuated single *a*. Example:

Á-inj-i (for as-inj-i), I am washed.

A and *e* are occasionally interchangeable. One hears, for instance:

En-aiyasha *or* en-aipesha, the lake.
Afigata *or* afigeta, the plain.
Apa *or* epa, formerly.

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E and *i* when spoken rapidly often sound as if they were the same letter. It is in consequence sometimes difficult to distinguish between such words as e-gel, to choose, and e-gil, to break.

E is changed to *i* when followed by *a*. Examples:

Ol-figujine, the hyena;	il-figujinia, the hyenas.
A-ure, to fear;	e-t-uri-a, I feared.

The Northern Masai frequently change *i* to *e* when the *i* is joined by a consonant to *a*. Examples:

Aidima *or* aidema, I was able.
Aidipa *or* aidepa, I finished.

When *i* is the first letter of a word it is usually dropped if preceded by another word ending in a vowel.

Aisho 'ndae (for aisho indae), I give you.
Aisho 'l-ayuk (for aisho il-ayuk), I give the boys.

I is also dropped whenever the sound permits at the beginning of sentences. Thus:

'N-etiain (for in-etiain), the stories.
'L-emon (for il-emon), the news.

When *i* is the last letter of a word and is followed by a vowel, *y* is often inserted to join the two vowels together. Examples:

En-gerai-y-ai (for en-gerai ai), my child.

Numerous changes take place in the spelling of verbs which commence with *i*. For a complete list *vide* page 53. It will be sufficient to give here the general rules.

I. The first letter of the verb (*i*) falls out whenever preceded by another *i* and followed by *i*, *l*, *n*, *ng*, *ny*, *r*, *s*, *t*, *w*, or *y*. Examples:

A-ilk, to clean (teeth);	i-'lk, thou cleanest (teeth).
A-ilep, to climb;	i-'lep, thou climbest.
A-inepu, to meet;	i-'nepu, thou meetest.
A-ingir, to look;	i-'ngir, thou lookest.
A-inyang-u, to buy;	i-'nyang-u, thou buyest.
A-irag, to sleep;	i-'rag, thou sleepest.
A-isiya, to touch;	i-'siya, thou touchest.
A-inak, to lose;	i-'nak, thou losest.
A-iwo-u, to catch blood in a vessel;	i-'wo-u, thou catchest blood in a vessel.
A-iyam, to marry;	i-'yam, thou marriest.

II. The *i* is changed to *o* whenever it is preceded by another *i* and followed by *d*, *g*, *k*, *t*, and *sh*. As will be shown shortly, the letters

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194 104 *k*, *t*, and *sh* cannot follow *n*; these letters therefore change at the same time to *g*, *d*, and *j* respectively. Examples:

A-idím, to be able;	i-ndím, thou art able.
A-igany, to fill;	i-ngany, thou fillest.
A-iken, to count;	i-ngen, thou countest.
A-itobir, to prepare;	i-ndobir, thou preparest.
A-ishop, to wear;	i-njop, thou wearest.

III. The *i* is changed to *n* whenever it is preceded by another *i* and followed by *b*, *p*, *ṗ*, or *ṉ*. It will be shown presently that *p*, *ṗ*, and *ṉ* are interchangeable and cannot follow *n*; these letters are consequently changed at the same time to *b*. Examples:

A-ibelekeny, to turn over;	i-mbelekeny, thou turnest over.
A-ipot, *or* A-iṗot, *or* A-iṉot, to call;	i-mbot, thou callest.

I and *y* are interchangeable when followed by *e* or *o*. The Northern Masai generally use the former, the Southern the latter. Examples:

En-gewárie *or* en-gewárye, the night.
Tolíkio *or* tolíkyo, tell.

Ye sometimes becomes *ie* after *n*. Examples:

A-tonie (for a-tónye), to sit on.
A-iminie (for a-imínye), to lose.

O becomes *u* when joined by a consonant to *a*. Examples:

A-iko, to do;	a-iku-na, I did.
A-iñgor, to look;	a-iñgur-a, I looked.

The Northern Masai sometimes pronounce *u* like *o*, or like the German *ö*. Examples:

A-idor (for a-idur), to move. A-söj (for a-suj), to follow.

B and *k* are sometimes interchangeable. Examples:

En-garikōbo *or* en-garibōbo, the mongoose.
Kinōkop *or* Kinōbop, a district near Naivasha known to Europeans as Kinangop.

Gh and *k* are interchangeable. The former sound is more used by the Southern Masai than by the Northern, and the women of Nairobi and Naivasha employ it more frequently than the men.

Both *gh* and *k* change to *g* when following *n*:

Enna-kerai *or* enna-gherai, this child; en-gerai, the child.
Ol-kujita *or* en-gujita, the blade of grass.
A-iko *or* a-igho, to do; i-ngo, thou dost; i-ngōko *or* i-ngōgho, you do.

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P, *ṗ*, and *ṗ* are interchangeable. The Northern Masai generally use *p*, the Southern *ṗ* or *ṗ*. Examples:

Ol-poror, ol-ṗoror, *or* ol-ṗoror, the generation, age.
Ṗôkin, ṗôkin, *or* ṗôkin, all.

K is occasionally interchangeable with *p*, *ṗ*, and *ṗ*.

For instance, ol-pukuri (*or* ol-ṗukuri *or* ol-ṗukuri), the (large) gourd, is also sometimes expressed ol-kupuri (pl. il-pukurto *or* il-kupurto).

Before *p*, *ṗ*, and *ṗ*, *n* becomes *m*, and the *p*, *ṗ*, or *ṗ* changes to *b*. Examples:

Ol-pukuri (*or* ol-ṗukuri *or* ol-ṗukuri), the (large) gourd.
Em-bukuri, the (small) gourd.
I-mbiri, thou fliest, (from a-ipiri, to fly).

When *k* is the last letter of a verb, the root undergoes various changes in the formation of the past tense. For a complete list *vide* p. 56.

It will be sufficient to state here that the *k* is dropped unless the letter which precedes it is *i* or *u*. Examples:

A-lak, to unfasten; a-ta-la-a, I unfastened.
A-mok, to become accustomed to; a-ta-mo-o, I became accustomed to.

But A-rik, to take (a person); a-to-rik-o, I took (a person).
A-nunuk, to fold; a-tu-nunuk-o, I folded.

The Northern Masai also frequently omit *k* both at the end and in the body of a word. Examples:

Il-tuñgana (for il-tuñganak), the men.
Il-ñganaiyo (for il-ñganaiyok), the fruit.
Kitua (for kituak), big (pl.).
A-ikweniye (for a-ikwenikye), to laugh at.
Arai (for araki), or.

Sh can only be used after a vowel or at the commencement of a word. Examples:

A-isho, to give.
Shoo, the grazing ground.
Elle-shani *or* enna-shani, this tree.
Le-shoruet, na-shoruet, O (the) friend!

After *l*, *sh* becomes *ch*, and after *n*, *j*. Examples:

I-njo, thou givest.
Ol-chani *or* en-jani, the tree.
Ol-choruet *or* en-joruet, the friend.

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194 *Ch* can only be used after *l*.

104 *J* occasionally changes to *t* in the formation of past tenses of verbs. Examples:

A-ji-ōyo, not to return;	a-ti-ōyo, I have not returned.
A-j-ōki, to say to;	a-ti-aka, I said to.

The *l* of the masculine article (*vide* p. 10) is dropped before words beginning with *e*, *i*, *r*, *s*, and *y*. Examples:

O-engat (for ol-engat), the male wildebeest.
O-iarata (for ol-iarata), the valley.
O-rorei (for ol-rorei), the word.
O-sarge (for ol-sarge), the blood.
O-yōyai (for ol-yōyai), the porcupine.

It has been stated that before *r* and *s* the *l* of the masculine article is assimilated as in Arabic, and that the double consonant is heard. This is, however, not the case. When the syllables are spoken separately, the singular article is clearly pronounced *o*, not *or* or *os*; and in the plural the article drops out altogether, unless it follows a word ending in a consonant, when an *i* is used, not *ir* or *is*.

Gh, *k*, *t*, and *sh* change to *g*, *g*, *d*, and *j* respectively after *n*. Examples:

En-gīyo (for en-ghīyo), the daughter.
'N-gīshu (for 'n-kīshu), the cattle.
I-ngilikwan-u (for i-nkilikwan-u), ask!
En-dim (for en-tim), the wood.
I-ndash-o (for i-ntash-o), stand!
En-jōni (for en-shōni), the piece of hide.
I-njop-o (for i-nshop-o), wear!

The *n* of the feminine article (*vide* p. 10) falls out before nouns commencing with one of the following letters: *e*, *i*, *m*, *ñg*, *ny*, *r*, *s*, *u*, *w*, and *y*. Examples:

E-engat (for en-engat), the female wildebeest.
E-ilata (for en-ilata), the oil.
E-mōti (for en-mōti), the cooking pot.
E-ñgorōyōni (for en-ñgorōyōni), the woman.
E-nyalata (for en-nyalata), the cud.
E-rug (for en-rug), the hump.
E-siangiki (for en-siangiki), the young woman.
E-ūlūlu (for en-ūlūlu), the pit.
E-wargas (for en-wargas), the female Grant's gazelle.
E-yă (for en-yă), the male.

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Before *b*, *n* becomes *m*, and before *p*, *ṗ*, or *ψ*, *n* becomes *m*, and the *p*, *ṗ*, or *ψ* changes to *b*: 194 104

Em-bae (for en-bae), the arrow.
I-mbelekeny-a (for i-nbelekeny-a), turn over!
Em-bo̧ût (for en-poût, *or* en-ṗoût, *or* en-ψoût), the trench.
I-mbot-o (for i-npot-o, *or* i-nṗot-o, *or* i-nψot-o), call!

Before substantives commencing with *l*, the *n* of the feminine article is assimilated, the double consonant being distinctly pronounced. Examples:

El-lusye (for en-lusye), the hole in the wall.
El-loñgo (for en-loñgo), the shield.

R must always be preceded by a vowel or another *r*. Examples:

Ol-orora, the crowd. 'N-gera, the children. 'N-gerra, the sheep.

R is sometimes omitted in the body of a noun to form diminutives, or is changed to *l* or *y*. Examples:

E-ñgorōyōni, the woman;	e-ñgooyōni, the female (used in a deprecatory sense).
En-gerai, the child;	en-gelai, the little child.
Ol-ōwaru, the beast of prey;	eng-ōwayu, the small beast of prey.

U and *w*, when followed by a vowel, are interchangeable, the former being used by the Northern, the latter by the Southern Masai. Examples:

Atua *or* atwa, I died *or* within.
Ol-móruo *or* ol-morwo, the old man.

Hw is occasionally substituted for *u* or *w*, otherwise it is not used. Examples:

E-hwēji (for e-wēji), the place.
E-hwaso (for e-uaso), the river.
Ol-osōhwan (for ol-osōwan), the buffalo.

THE ACCENT.

In most words all syllables are accentuated alike, a very slight stress being perhaps laid on the penultimate. This is more particularly noticeable when the last syllable but one contains a long vowel, e. g. ol-ayóni, 'n-joníto. 194

Should the accent fall on any other syllable but the penultimate, it is specially marked, thus: ol-móruo, kewárie.

These words are sometimes, and probably correctly, pronounced el-morwo, kewarye; but owing possibly to the difficulty of making

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194 *w* or *y* follow *r*, without stopping in the middle of the word, the *w* and *y* are generally changed to *u* and *i*.

194 193 The accent, such as it is, does not fall on the penultimate in the following cases:

I. When the subject of a verb is the first person plural, the last syllable is always slightly accentuated. Examples:

Ki-sűj, we follow (him). Ki-tu-suj-á, we have followed (him).

Ki-suj means either, thou followest me, *or* he *or* they follow thee; and ki-tu-suj-a, thou hast followed me, *or* he *or* they have followed thee.

II. Whenever one of two *a*'s falls out before *i* in verbs commencing with the latter letter, the remaining *a* is rather more strongly sounded than the other syllables:

Á-isuj-a (for aa-isuj-a), I washed thee, *or* he *or* they washed me.
E-ñgas á-isuj (for e-ñgas aa-isuj), they begin to wash (him).
E-iyōlo á-isuj-a (for e-iyōlo aa-isuj-a), they know how to wash (him).

Some confusion is at times caused by the subject or object not being expressed when it is a personal pronoun. For instance, the woman said to him, *and* he said to the woman, are both translated by e-ti-aka e-ñgorōyōni. The difference is marked by raising or lowering the voice at the end of the substantive, and the following rule is invariable.

If the subject is the substantive, the voice is raised as in asking a question; if the subject is the pronoun, the voice is lowered as when finishing a sentence:

Thus: E-ti-aka e-ñgorōyō^{ni} means, the woman said to him.
Whilst, E-ti-aka e-ñgorōyō$_{ni}$ means, he, she, *or* they said to the woman.

In the same way the difference between, for instance, I followed thee, *and* he, she, *or* they followed me, is marked by raising or lowering the voice at the end of the word, e.g.:

Aa^{suj}, he, she, *or* they follow me. Aa$_{suj}$, I follow thee.
Aa-tu-suj-^{a}, he, she, *or* they followed me. Aa-tu-suj-$_{a}$, I followed thee.
Á-isuj-^{a}, he, she, *or* they washed me. Á-isuj-$_{a}$, I washed thee.

The same forms are used for the simple relative, whether it is employed as the subject or the object of the verb. When the

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relative is the subject, however, the voice is raised at the end of the verb; when the object, it is lowered.

Ol-tuñgani ŏ-tu-suj-$_a^a$, the man who followed him.
Ol-tuñgani ŏ-tu-suj-$_a$, the man whom he followed.

GENDER AND NUMBER.

The Masai language distinguishes by the article two genders or classes answering approximately to masculine and feminine. As a general rule the former signifies big, strong, and masculine; whilst the latter may be taken to mean something of a weak or feminine nature, and also of a diminutive or affectionate character. There are, it is true, exceptions to this rule, for whereas ol-origha, a small three-legged stool, il-kiyo, tears, and ol-kimōjīno, the finger or toe, are masculine, eng-aina, the arm or hand, en-geju, the leg or foot, e-muny, a rhinoceros, and en-gukuu or en-dyemasi, a devil or fantastic wild beast, which takes the place of the dragon in English fairy tales, are feminine. But on the whole it will be found to be correct, and the following list of examples will help to prove the theory:

Masculine.	Feminine.
Ol-tuñgani, the man.	En-duñgani, the little man.
Ol-ayōni, the boy.	Eng-ayōni, the little boy.
Ol-dia, the dog.	En-dia, the bitch *or* pup.
O-sanja, the male lover.	E-sanja, the female lover.
Ol-karsis, the rich man.	En-garsis, the rich woman.
Ol-ashe, the bull calf.	Eng-ashe, the cow calf.
Ol-alem, the sword.	Eng-alem, the knife.
Il-kujit, the long, coarse grass.	'N-gujit, the short grass *or* turf.
Ol-kerr, the ram.	En-gerr, the ewe.
Ol-aputani, the father *or* son-in-law.	Eng-aputani, the mother *or* daughter-in-law.

One word, e-wēji, the place, although to all appearances feminine, might perhaps be classed by itself, as the demonstrative pronoun and some other parts of speech assume unusual forms when agreeing with it.

There are two numbers, singular and plural, which are marked by variations in the termination of nouns. In verbs and pronouns there are some indications of reduplication being used to indicate plurality. Nouns are not susceptible to any inflexions to mark the cases, or, with few exceptions, to mark the gender. In the following words the spelling of the nouns is slightly changed to denote something of a weak or diminutive nature.